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ABSTRACT

During a two-week period from September 14-26, 1970, the National Education Association Task Force visited a total of 70 school districts in Mississippi and Louisiana. Team members met with teachers, principals, parents, lay citizens, and civil rights and other community groups, and, wherever possible, they visited schools and conferred also with school officials. Although of necessity, much of the information was secondary, that which was used for this report was considered carefully screened for its validity. Among the eight hopeful aspects of desegregation found by the Task Force was the peaceful opening, for the most part, of Mississippi and Louisiana schools in September 1970, and the lessening of observable in-school segregation of students. Major problems of desegregation included the displacement of black educators in status positions, continuing displacement of black teachers, discriminatory treatment of students, continuing growth of the public school movement, the misuse of federal funds, and, lack of black representation on Boards of Education. (JM)

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REPORT OF NEA TASK FORCE III

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION: LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI

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NOVEMBER 1970

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
Scope and Procedures of Study	2
BACKGROUND	4
Prevailing Patterns of Desegregation	4
FINDINGS	7
Hopeful Aspects of Desegregation	7
The Major Problems of Desegregation	8
I. Displacement of Black Educators in Status Positions	8
II. Continuing Displacement of Black Teachers	16
III. Discriminatory Treatment of Students	22
IV. Continuing Growth of Private School Movement	33
V. Misuse of Federal Funds	36
VI. Lack of Black Representation on Boards of Education	38

REPORT OF THE NEA TASK FORCE ON SCHOOL DESEGREGATION:

LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI

INTRODUCTION

This Task Force was established by the Executive Secretary of the National Education Association in late August 1970, at the request of the NEA's two recognized state affiliates in Louisiana and Mississippi: The Louisiana Education Association and the Mississippi Teachers Association. Its charge was to continue the work of the two earlier NEA Task Forces, which conducted surveys in a total of 75 school districts in the two states during January and February 1970, in order to assess the progress and problems of desegregation, the pace of which was sharply--and in many instances, chaotically--increased by the October 1969 ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court, calling for an immediate end to dual school systems in the South. The earlier Task Force studies were also initiated at the request of the two state associations, and by a similar request from the NEA Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities.

This report and its recommendations are based on the same principles that motivated the earlier Task Force studies in Louisiana and Mississippi:

1. The rights of educators whose jobs are jeopardized by the desegregation of public schools must be protected.

2. The establishment of private schools to circumvent the integration of public schools is ethically and educationally reprehensible.

3. NEA resources must be made available to assist the effort in local education associations to bring about meaningful integration.

In undertaking the three Task Force studies at a time when, under federal pressure, the dual system of public education is finally being eliminated in the

Deep South, the purpose of the NEA is to observe the process of desegregation as it occurs and to be ready with immediate remedial assistance where the rights of teachers and students are found to be threatened or abridged.

Scope and Procedures of Study

During a two-week period, from September 14-26, 1970, the NEA Task Force, divided into two-member teams, visited a total of 70 school districts in Mississippi and Louisiana. Team members met with teachers, principals, parents, lay citizens, civil rights and other community groups and, wherever possible, they visited schools and conferred also with school officials. Due to the injunctions and threatened injunctions against NEA personnel involved in observing the desegregation process in Mississippi, some of the Task Force teams in this state did not enter onto school property. However, this did not prove to be an insuperable barrier to the gathering of reliable and extensive information; the method of study was simply altered to provide for meetings with educators after school hours and away from school property.

It must be acknowledged, however, that much of the information collected is secondary information. It could hardly be otherwise, for even in districts where team members were able to visit schools and meet with school authorities, those authorities would not be likely to report their own discriminatory treatment of teachers and students. The report that follows includes only that information which appeared to be substantial, rather than rumor, and which was received from persons whom the Task Force believed to be directly knowledgeable about the experiences they reported. Many accounts of discrimination, as related by educators and others, were not recorded, simply because Task Force teams had questions as to the accuracy of the information or the authority of the persons interviewed.

It should be emphasized that the specific instances of discriminatory activity cited in this report are by no means inclusive; they are mentioned only as examples of a widespread pattern of discrimination. In citing these particular examples, school districts are identified except where such identification might jeopardize the informant.

BACKGROUND

"For all practical purposes, the dual school system as it has existed in the South will be eliminated by September 7."

--Jerris Leonard
Assistant Attorney General for
Civil Rights
June 9, 1970

Elimination of the legal structure of dualism was indeed being accomplished as southern schools opened in September 1970. But the tenuous beginnings of a "unitary school system" in the South are affecting the education of black youth, the professional expectations of black educators, and the economic and political aspirations of southern black communities in a way that could not have been anticipated during the long struggle for integrated education.

This report deals specifically with the results of desegregation in the two states of Louisiana and Mississippi; however, the members of this NEA Task Force have sufficient familiarity with the desegregation process in other states to conclude that the desperately serious problems they have encountered during this two-week survey are by no means unique to Louisiana and Mississippi, nor even to the South. White racism is not peculiarly southern; it is a national illness. Zealously guarded white control over economic resources, political resources, and public-serving institutions is a national reality.

Prevailing Patterns of Desegregation

"For those of us who saw school integration as a process that would humanize an institution that had been dehumanized by segregation, recent events have been extremely frustrating. We had hoped to see black and white brought together in an arena where both could interact in tension and freedom. But desegregation is being implemented under the almost complete control of the same people who enforced segregation. After a court or the

> Department of Health, Education and Welfare acts, black people are no longer heard. They are left to be shuffled, cut, and stacked at the whim of The Man. This process is called implementation, and it is through implementation that the plaintiffs who have just won a judgment in favor of their civil rights can lose their human rights. (Emphasis added.)
>
> * * *
>
> "Black teachers are being emasculated and stripped of their standing before their own communities. Teachers with years of experience are being assigned as teacher aides or assistants to white teachers. New job categories are being created; black Mississippians will explain to you that 'Co-principal is short for colored principal.'"[1]

The author of the above words, Rims Barber, a Delta Ministry Staff member, recites in the same article a shocking catalogue of the injustices laid upon black people as white-controlled school systems move to implement court-and-HEW-approved desegregation plans. In addition to the massive displacement of black educators (with all that this implies for the economic level of black communities and the aspiration levels of black youth), he speaks of the isolation of the desegregated school from the black community; the emptiness for black children of school curricula that fail to recognize the beauty (or existence) of black culture or the Afro-American contribution to American Society; he describes the various devices used to maintain in-school segregation; he mentions the continuing white exodus from the public schools, the lowering of school tax rates; and finally, he speaks of the $78 million federal funding recently made available to facilitate desegregation in southern school districts:

> "Existing OEO and HEW programs designed to help the poor (and offering a modicum of control to the poor) are losing their money to southern school districts that have not desegregated after 16 years of enforcement.... The money will go to teach white teachers how to act around black people, to

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[1]Harvard Center for Law and Education, Inequality in Education, "From Intransigence to Compliance Is Two Steps Forward and Two Steps Back." Barber, Rims. The Center: Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 30, 1970. p. 13.

> make black schools fit for white children, and for sundry other programs designed to 'ease the burden' of desegregation.
>
> 'Nothing is allocated to ease the burden that must be borne by every black child who must attend schools in Mississippi and in the other southern states, some of which are distinguished from Mississippi only by better manners and subtler tactics."[1]

The observations of this Task Force in Mississippi and Louisiana indicate that in neither state are the tactics of racial discrimination subtle enough to hide the malignancy of its continued existence as school systems move into their first and second year of desegregation. The findings of the Task Force fully support the conclusions of the article quoted above. Not far beneath the facade of law and order that prevails in most desegregating districts of Louisiana and Mississippi, the problems remain much the same as those described by the earlier NEA Task Forces of January and February 1970. In the remaining sections of this report, the Task Force records its specific findings concerning both the progress and problems of desegregation in September 1970.

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[1] Ibid

FINDINGS

Hopeful Aspects of Desegregation

It is important to give a balanced view of the desegregation process, as the NEA Task Force has observed it in Louisiana and Mississippi during the early weeks of school--from September 14 through 26, 1970. A balanced view, however, does not result in a balanced picture; for, the bad news of desegregation in these states tragically outweighs the good. In brief--and a recital of the favorable aspects of desegregation in these states cannot be otherwise--the NEA Task Force can submit the following as the most encouraging of its observations in the school districts visited:

- For the most part, Mississippi and Louisiana schools opened peacefully in September 1970. There were some scattered outbreaks of violence, boycotts, demonstrations by both blacks and whites in protest against student assignments, busing, use of school buildings, and segregation by sex; but in the great majority of school districts, law and order were maintained.

- There was less observable in-school segregation of students during September 1970 than during January and February 1970, when the earlier Task Force surveys were conducted.

- In some districts, Task Force members reported, "major strides have been made toward acceptance of integration." Court orders have resulted in an improved racial balance of staff and students. Human relations workshops in some districts, according to black teachers interviewed, have resulted in some improvement of teacher attitude toward students and other teachers of the opposite race.

- In several school districts (Monroe City, Lincoln Parish, Red River Parish, and Concordia Parish, Louisiana; and Columbus and Starkville, Mississippi), successful court actions, supported by NEA and the affiliated state associations, have resulted in the reinstatement of black teachers who had been arbitrarily dismissed or downgraded during the desegregation process.

- In several districts now in their second year of desegregation, it was reported that white students have begun to return to the public schools from the privately established segregation academies to which they had fled during the first year.

- In at least two Louisiana districts, the use of the National Teacher Examination as a means of screening out black teachers has been tried and abandoned; in one of these districts, after the blacks had been tested and had shown a consistently high score, they heard no more about NTE; in another district, many of the white teachers had exceedingly low scores, and its use was discontinued.

- In some districts, where blacks have demonstrated their voting strength and have organized themselves into an effective political force through such pressure devices as economic boycotts and carefully directed demonstrations, they have won some concessions from white school officials; for example, the retention of the names of former black schools that were converted into desegregated schools. But of greater long-range significance, such efforts have achieved a new level of visibility for blacks as a force that must be recognized, that must be considered, and a force that demands participation in public school and political decision-making.

- Where there is effective school leadership with demonstrated commitment to successful desegregation of the schools, the problems of desegregation are clearly minimized. Even when the school board and central school administration are reluctant or openly hostile to desegregation, the skillful leadership of a building principal can create a climate favorable to integration within a given school. Task Force members did observe such schools or were told of their existence. For example, in the southern section of La Fourche Parish, Louisiana, black teachers reported that in one school, particularly, the principal (white) is a fair-minded person, believes that desegregation can work, and is making it work within that school by his leadership.

The Major Problems of Desegregation

I. Displacement of Black Educators in Status Positions

The findings of this Task Force lead its members to the conclusion that what is happening in Louisiana and Mississippi schools is not integration; rather, it is disintegration--the near total disintegration of black authority in every area of the system of public education.

Black principals continue to be reduced in status and authority by the following methods:

1. Outright Demotion - To teaching posts, to assistant and co-principalships, often with heavy teaching schedules and with

little or no defined administrative responsibilities. In most instances, the reductions in status do not carry a reduction in pay; however, an emerging trend noted was demotion the first year of desegregation and reduction in pay the second year to conform to reduced responsibilities. A few examples indicate the overriding trend of demotion:

- Rankin County, Mississippi--The principal of a formerly all-black school (grades 1-12) was demoted to administrative assistant to the white principal at the same school (now desegregated and reduced to grades 1-6). In the same county, a black principal had been replaced by a white former coach, with no administrative experience.

- St. James Parish, Louisiana--The principal of a formerly all-black high school has been made "assistant visiting teacher". His former high school is now a desegregated boys' high school, its name changed, and under the principalship of a white. The displaced principal has a master's degree and 25 years tenure with the district.

- Hinds County, Mississippi--A black principal, with 20 years' tenure, has been demoted to a classroom teaching post.

- Claiborne Parish, Louisiana--The principal of the formerly all-black school (grades 1-12, enrollment 912) was demoted to the post of assistant principal when the school was desegregated. Although the demoted principal had been in his post for five years, he was replaced as principal by a white, who had served as principal for only three years in a school enrolling only 99 students.

- Okolona, Chickasaw County, Mississippi--It is reported that the black co-principal at Okolona High School is co-principal in name only, disciplining only black students and keeping records of books, repairs, and buses (but not making bus assignments). This educator was called vice-principal last year until blacks complained and his title was changed. A white counselor was promoted to principal over the black principal, who has an M.A. and has been a principal in the system for fifteen years. The white principal earned the M.A. after the appointment. The black "co-principal" occupied last year a small office behind the storage room; this year he moved to the former counselor's office, which had previously been a ladies' room. The white principal allegedly told him that he, the white, was the principal, that he would be willing to confer with the "co-principal," but that he would have the final word.

- Winston County (Louisville Municipal Separate School District), Mississippi--No blacks hold any leadership positions in the system including principalships. The one black principal before this year died, and was replaced by a white. There are black assistant principals, but in name only with no authority. The white head coach of the Louisville District left to be principal of a private school; the black head coach was then appointed assistant principal, so that a white could take the open coaching position. In at least one school (serving 1-3), the assistant principal has not even been given acknowledgment that this is her title, although required by the court order.

2. "Phasing Down" of the Black Principals' Schools--Task Force members found few instances where principals of formerly all-black high schools are retained as principals of desegregated high schools. Where they do retain the post, it is, with few exceptions (see 3 below) to a school that has been reduced in grade level to a junior high, middle, elementary, primary, or special education school. Not only does this mean a reduction in status and sometimes in salary, but it also means for the black principal, the teachers, students, and parents, the loss of an institution over which blacks had some control, in which they could take justifiable pride, and which in many areas has been a community center, as well as a center of learning. In a number of districts visited, there are now no black principals at the secondary level. In many instances, the white person who is named principal of the desegregated high school is less qualified through experience and academic credential than the black, whose assignment is to a junior high or elementary school.

- St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana--Task Force members met with two principals of former all-black schools, grades 1-12. One of these schools, when desegregated, was reduced to a primary grade school and the principal's salary was cut by $685 per year; the other was reduced to grades 6-8, the principal receiving a pay cut of $800. The latter principal

retired early in preference to accepting the reduced status and salary. Both of these principals shortly before the Task Force visit, had been promised full restitution of the year's pay reduction (for 1969-70), and the still employed principal had been told that his salary for the current year will be restored to its former level. But for their loss of status and for the loss of the two high schools, there could be no compensation for the principals, the teachers, or the students. In this same parish, Task Force members interviewed the principal of a formerly all-black high school. This black educator had six years' tenure as principal in the district and had his master's degree; the principal named to the desegregated high school was a white former coach, with no administrative experience.

- A Mississippi School District--The principal of a formerly all-black junior high school reportedly was offered a position as principal at a formerly all-white elementary school. He refused the assignment on learning that the office would be in the basement and he would be in charge of buses (not routes), "finances", and student tardiness.

- Iberville Parish, Louisiana--Prior to desegregation, the system had eight black secondary principals; it now employs no black principals at the secondary level.

- Lincoln Parish, Louisiana--There is reportedly no black principal above the sixth grade level.

3. Retention of Title with Diminution of Authority--By the assignment to the desegregated school of a white assistant principal, or curriculum supervisor, who is regarded by blacks and whites alike as the individual who possesses the real managerial authority for that school. In a number of districts visited, according to Task Force reports, various new positions, held by whites, have been created since desegregation. These positions held such titles as "area principal", "supervising principal", and "curriculum coordinator". It is widely believed by blacks that these newly titled whites constitute the real authority behind the black principals, who have been reduced to mere figurehead status. Task Force members found no dearth of evidence to support this conclusion.

- A Mississippi District--Is one of the few districts where the black high school has been retained as the desegregated high school and where the black principal has retained his title. It is very clear, however, that the title is all he has retained. The black principal does not run the school. The system has created a new post of assistant superintendent; the primary duties of the assistant superintendent appear to be to run the "integrated" high school, since he has no regular responsibility for any other school in the system. The black high school principal meets each morning with the assistant superintendent (who occupies the principal's former office), and receives his directions for the day. The principal's office is a remodeled former girls' lavatory. The assistant principal of the high school is white; and the white school secretary is the wife of the assistant superintendent. It is clear that this principal has no opportunity to exercise the responsibilities of that office, surrounded as he is by a white assistant, the former white high school principal as the assistant superintendent, and the assistant superintendent's wife as secretary of the school.

- Jefferson Parish, Louisiana--The system employs no assistant principal black or white--in any elementary school employing a white principal; nor, with one exception, have assistant principals--black or white--been assigned to any elementary school that is still all black. However, in every desegregated elementary school with a black principal, there is a white assistant. The exception to this pattern is an elementary school, headed by a black principal, which was desegregated in 1969-70, with approximately 70 white students. At that time a white assistant principal was assigned to the school. Administrative rezoning resulted in the school's becoming all black again in 1970-71, but the white assistant principal was retained. She has a direct telephone line to the central office that the school secretary cannot cut in on; the black principal has no such line.

- Union Parish, Louisiana--A formerly all-black high school, now a desegregated middle school (grades 4-8), still retains the black high school principal; however, the school also employs a white supervising principal whose statements led the visiting Task Force members to believe that he considers himself the sole authority for the operation of the school.

The patterns of discrimination shift: In some districts, Task Force members found two high schools or junior high schools, desegregated by race, but segregated by sex, with a black coordinating principal supposedly in charge of both, but with white building

principals actually in authority at each school; in other districts, white area principals have been named in charge of separate junior and senior high schools, with a black serving as junior high and a white as senior high principal. The prevailing belief among black teachers--and the evidence justifies this belief--is that whatever administrative device is used, the objective, and the accomplished fact, is the retention of white control over every desegregated school.

4. Paper Promotion--To token positions at the central office, without any clear delineation of responsibilities and without authority. Such token titles include the following: supervisor of child welfare and attendance, instructional materials supervisor, assistant director of federal programs, and community relations advisor. In a Louisiana district, for example, a black former principal was appointed to the central office post of instructional materials supervisor and was assigned janitorial duties.

Once in a central office position, testimony indicated, blacks find themselves blocked from any decision-making authority or even from knowing what the decisions are until they have been publicly announced. The testimony from black teachers further indicated that there is a widespread mistrust on the part of teachers of blacks who do obtain such "promotions", for it is felt that the only way such posts can be retained is by assuming an attitude of subservience to white school officials. This is not to say that there are no effective black administrators in central office positions. If such admini-

strators are able to function effectively, however, it is by dint of their own persistence and strength against overwhelming odds. Testimony indicated, in fact, that the selection of blacks for promotion to central office posts is commonly based on two apparently opposing criteria:

(1) On their qualifications as "safe Negroes," who will cause no trouble; and

(2) On their reputations as "militants," whose aggressiveness may be stifled by co-optation into a position of pseudo authority.

It should be noted further that, aside from the few token black positions, the complexion of central office staffs in Louisiana and Mississippi--from administrative to secretarial and clerical--continues to be overwhelmingly white.

Coaches

The second major casualty of school desegregation is the black head coach. Although many districts were found where the black coaches had obviously superior credentials in terms of training, experience, and team records, Task Force members found no district in either Mississippi or Louisiana where a black is employed as the head coach of a desegregated high school. A possible exception should be noted: In Marion County, Mississippi, a black coach, who had been demoted, had been promised that he would be assigned to the position of head coach at the desegregated high school. In this instance, the white head coach had resigned following the adoption of a policy that would lead to the equalization of salary differentials to black and white teachers who also are assigned coaching duties.

As Mississippi and Louisiana schools desegregate, black coaches are made assistant coaches, often of second-string teams, assistant principals, physical education teachers; and in some districts they have been made head coach at the junior high level. In North Panola, Mississippi, the black head coach was made assistant coach at the desegregated high school and was promised by his principal that the next head coach position would be his. However, when the white head coach resigned, the superintendent imported a white coach from out of state, who brought his own assistant. The black assistant was then demoted to number three in rank; rather than accept this triple demotion, he resigned. The earlier NEA Task Force reported the case of a black head coach in Thibbodaux, Louisiana, who, when his school was desegregated, was demoted to assistant coach of the B team, despite the outstanding record of his team and despite the lesser qualifications of the white who replaced him as head coach. Since the first Task Force visit, the white head coach has been assigned to the post of head basketball coach; instead of promoting the highly qualified black to the top post, another white, far less qualified, has been appointed head coach.

Like the deposed black principals, the coaches are not concerned solely with their own loss of position; they express deep concern about the effects on the black students. Task Force members heard many reports that black students are not going out for football or other varsity sports as they did before desegregation, that they are no longer getting the quality of coaching that they once had, and that athletic scholarships are not being awarded to them as in the past.

Band Directors

Band directors also are among the most consistently demoted of black professionals. They, too, are commonly relegated to the post of "assistant",

regardless of how their qualifications compare to the white directors; they may be made assistant choral director, music teacher, or, as is so often the case with classroom teachers, assigned to some subject that is entirely outside their field of specialty. Task Force members did, however, find one exception to this pattern: In one district (East Tallahatchie, Mississippi), it was reported that during the first semester, emphasis would be placed on the marching band and a white would serve as band director; during the next semester, it is anticipated that emphasis will be placed on the concert band, with the black as leader and the white as assistant.

II. Continuing Displacement of Black Teachers

The federal court of appeals with jurisdiction over the six-state region that includes Mississippi and Louisiana has issued guidelines, in the "Singleton decree", expressly providing that in the desegregation process staff members who work directly with children and professional staff on the administrative level shall be hired, assigned, promoted, paid, demoted, dismissed, and otherwise treated without regard to race, color, or national origin.

The Singleton decree provides that when there is a necessary reduction-in-force due to desegregation:

> --the staff members to be dismissed or demoted must be selected on the basis of objective and reasonable nondiscriminatory standards from all the staff of the school district."
>
> --the necessary reduction-in-force must be made in a manner which would not change the ratio of black and white teachers in the system.
>
> --any vacancies which occur subsequent to such reduction may not be filled through recruitment of a person of a race, color, or national origin different from that of the individual dismissed or demoted, until each displaced staff member who is qualified has had an opportunity to fill the vacancy and has failed to accept an offer to do so.

Under the Singleton decree, "demotion" includes "any reassignment -

(1) under which the staff member receives less pay or has less responsibility than under the assignment he held previously;

(2) which requires a lesser degree of skill than did the assignment he held previously; or

(3) under which the staff member is asked to teach a subject or grade other than one for which he is certified or for which he has had substantial experience within a reasonably current period." (The court cited five years as such a reasonable period.)

The guidelines stated in the Singleton decree generally are incorporated in school desegregation decrees issued by federal district judges in Mississippi and Louisiana. Nevertheless, the findings of the Task Force indicate that these guidelines are widely misinterpreted, misapplied, or simply ignored in the Mississippi and Louisiana districts visited. The discriminatory treatment of black educators in administrative and supervisory positions has been described above; for the most part the patterns are repetitious of those reported by the earlier NEA Task Forces in January and February 1970. The displacement of teachers also follows similar patterns to those reported earlier. Testimony received by this Task Force indicated that black teachers continue to be displaced by the following methods:

1. Outright Dismissals and Nonrenewals of Contract--ostensibly because of reduced attendance due to desegregation, although white teachers continue to be employed; or because the black teachers are "not qualified", although they were sufficiently qualified to be employed and to serve for many years under the dual system. There appears to be a near total absence of specific personnel policies, providing "objective and reasonable nondiscriminatory standards" on which to

base desegregation-related dismissals, demotion, or promotion. Even in isolated instances where written policies were found, they were extremely broad.

As blacks resign and are dismissed, they are commonly replaced by whites. Moreover, misinterpretation of the black-white faculty ratio requirement of the Singleton decree--whether through ignorance or purposeful subversion of its meaning--is further reducing the ranks of black teachers: In those districts that have experienced a massive exodus of white teachers to the privately established "segregation academies", many instances were found where black teachers have been dismissed, and whites employed, in order to maintain the black-white ratio that was obtained at the time the district was placed under court order. It would appear that this is a misapplication of the Singleton ruling, which requires that when teachers are dismissed due to desegregation, subsequent vacancies may not be filled through recruitment of a person of a race different from that of the individual dismissed, "until each displaced staff member who is qualified to do so has had opportunity to fill the vacancy and has failed to accept an offer to do so." Singleton makes no requirement concerning the race of the person employed to a position vacated by a teacher who has voluntarily resigned. Nevertheless, Singleton is being locally interpreted to apply in cases of white resignations; as a result, ironically, the flight of white teachers in many districts leads to the dismissal of blacks.

- Lafayette County, Mississippi--Teachers assert that there were 59 black teachers in 1968 and there are only 30 employed in the district in 1970. Each time a black teacher leaves, the replacement is white. It was estimated that 20 teachers were hired by the system this year, only two of whom are black.

- Noxubee County, Mississippi--Under the court order, each school was required to maintain a black-white faculty ratio of 2:1, to conform to the systemwide ratio that existed at the time the order was issued. At this time, however, the systemwide ratio of black to white teachers is 3:1, due to the flight of white teachers to private segregated schools. Although only about 100 white pupils remain and over 3,000 black, only white teachers are being hired in an effort to regain what local school officials interpret as a court requirement for a 2:1 black-white staff ratio.

- Marshall County, Mississippi--The private segregation academies have attracted from the public schools of this district large numbers of white students and teachers, thus altering the systemwide black-white faculty ratio from the time of the Singleton decree. The Singleton ratio was supposed to have been set at 64% white to 36% black, but when white teachers and white students left the school system, it was reported, the black principals of two elementary schools retained their black teachers and thus were able to keep faculty ratio closer to the student ratio. Both of these principals, reportedly, feel that they are in violation of the court order for not firing black teachers. The white principals did fire black teachers to conform to their interpretation of the Singleton ratio.

- La Fourche Parish, Louisiana--From 1965 to 1969, it was reported, there was a net gain of four black teachers and a net gain of 163 white teachers. It was stated that black teachers with master's degrees have applied for jobs in the parish and have been informed by school officials that there are no openings, even before the applicants are asked about their qualifications or field of specialty. At the same time, however, school officials have continued to employ new white teachers.

- Meridian, Mississippi--There has been a reduction of 17 black teachers this year, and a gain of five whites.

- Richland Parish, Louisiana--Twenty black teachers and three whites were dismissed at the close of school year 1969-70. The letters of dismissal, reportedly, were sent during the last two days of school. This year, the school system employed 37 whites and six blacks to replace last year's dismissals.

  Also in Richland Parish, Task Force members met with a dismissed black teacher, with 16 years' tenure, although with only one year of service in the school from which he was dismissed. His assigned subjects had been agriculture and biology; he was certified to teach both of these subjects, having a master's degree in science and 62 hours in agriculture. His letter of dismissal cited the following "reasons":

"Your teaching skills are below an acceptable standard required to provide a good learning environment for children.

"Lack of preparation and organization for daily classroom instruction.

"Your inability to maintain order and control of your students.

"Your lack of subject matter knowledge in your certified teaching areas."

This teacher's principal had questioned him, stating that he was not following the biology textbook. The teacher had explained that the biology textbook he was using was ten years old and that he had been coordinating some of the material from the new textbook used by white teachers with his old material. The principal's reply had been, "You are to stick to your textbook and stop using those big words".

The superintendent of this parish was quoted as saying that he only wanted "a speck of black teachers, as few as the law allows".

2. Discriminatory Assignment and Transfer Practices--Black teachers continue to be assigned to subject areas for which they are uncertified. Task Force members met with foreign language, English, Social Studies, and Home Economics secondary teachers, fully certified, and with high academic credentials, who have been assigned to teach elementary, primary, and special education classes. In many of the districts visited, out-of-field assignment of black teachers seems to follow a consistent pattern; that is, black high school and junior high school teachers are commonly reassigned to teach primary and elementary grades, remedial classes, and physical education without regard for their field of specialty, while white teachers are shifted into junior high and senior high levels. With respect to particular subject areas at the secondary level, strange variations occur in the assignment of black

teachers; in some districts, it was reported, black teachers are assigned to such subjects as Physical Education, Social Studies, Home Economics, and Shop, while white teachers are assigned Language Arts, Math, and Science. In some districts, blacks are assigned to Math, but not to Language Arts; in one southern Louisiana high school, testimony indicated, no black is permitted to teach American History. Apparently, the subject assignment of black teachers is based less upon their qualifications than upon the particular racial taboo of each white community. It is also noted by black teachers--and by the Task Force--that such out-of-field assignment greatly facilitates the dismissal of black teachers for "incompetence", and "lack of preparation in assigned field". Understandably, there is much concern on the part of the black teachers that even greater numbers of dismissals will take place next year; and the concern is deepened by the fact that, for the most part, the evaluation of teachers, black and white, is performed by whites. A Mississippi Task Force team reported, "A new titled person is in evidence--Supervisor of Instruction (white). This person with more authority than the black principal, is evaluating teachers. This may be the prelude for gathering evidence for wholesale dismissal. We must prepare these black teachers for fighting these slanted evaluations".

The transfer of teachers to achieve desegregation follows a clearly observable pattern in many districts: Consistently, school officials transfer the most highly qualified blacks to formerly all-white schools, while replacing them in the formerly all-black schools with the least qualified whites in training and experience.

In some districts, it was reported, white teachers are asked to transfer and are given the option to refuse, whereas black teachers are told; their alternative is dismissal. White teachers are informed in advance of the year's assignment; black teachers are given minimal notice and may not know during the entire summer where, or whether, they are to be employed for the next school year.

3. Use of Newly Devised "Qualification Standards"--The National Teacher Examination (NTE), the Graduate Record Examination, and other such tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, are being used in increasing numbers of Mississippi and Louisiana districts as a means of screening out blacks. Some districts have dismissed teachers who fail to make the required score or have used the tests as the basis for salary increments; in other districts, the tests are used as a screening device only in the employment of teachers. It should be noted that NEA-supported litigation has successfully challenged discriminatory use of such tests in Columbus (National Teacher Examination) and Starkville (Graduate Record Examination), Mississippi. In a similar court suit, supported by the Northern Mississippi Rural Legal Services, discriminatory use of NTE is being challenged in Okolona, Mississippi. A subsistence grant from the NEA DuShane Emergency Fund for Teacher Rights has been awarded to the teacher-plaintiffs in this suit.

III. Discriminatory Treatment of Students

> "Although people don't say anything about the schools here or you read anything in the papers, I can truly tell you that the schools here are supposed to be black and white

together, but the white people act as though it is all theirs. The white teachers only stand on one side of the classroom (the white side because that is the way they have it, the white on one side, the Negro on the other, or rather that it is the way we sit). The Negro teachers are all smiles around the white kids and when the blacks ask them to repeat something that has been said they won't even do it. The majority of whites are riding on buses to themselves...Before school started they had chosen the whites to head the clubs and everything else. Most of the people here have tried to speak up, but it would always get back around to the whites, and someone would get a phone call or get beat up. We are not a part of anything but the football team.

...I have been trying to talk to different students about it, but their attitude is that they will soon be leaving or graduating and they don't care what these people do. I think that it is time that we do something because I have some sisters and brothers and I want them to get a good education."

--A letter from a black student
in Mississippi

Instead of a "good education", this student and her brothers and sisters are confronting a new kind of learning experience, and a bitter one. They are learning that desegregation, as it is practiced in their Mississippi school, has not freed them from the separate and unequal status of dualism. Since the usual pattern of high school desegregation makes the former white school the new high school (regardless of which school has the best physical plant), the school colors, mascot, name, athletic trophies, and other such symbols of the white school are retained; the emblems of black school identity are obliterated. The black students are thus submerged, rather than merged with the former all-white student body. In Granada County, Mississippi, at the first football game of the 1970 season, "Dixie" was played at half time by the high school band, and rebel flags were passed out in the stands by the all-white cheerleading squad. This kind of "desegregation" has made the blacks' sense of separateness and inequality perhaps even more difficult to bear than under

the previously dual system. For, in the desegregated school their exposure to racial slights and exclusions is unremitting and inescapable, whereas, within the walls of the all-black school, they could for a time shut out the sickness of racism.

As noted earlier in this report, the NEA Task Force seriously looked for schools where a climate favorable to integrated education appears to be developing where real learning is possible, not only in academic subjects, but in the areas of human interaction and understanding. The testimony of teachers suggested that this kind of climate is beginning to grow in some individual schools, due in large measure to the effective and committed leadership of some building principals.

But in most school districts visited, even those where surface appearances indicated that desegregation is proceeding well, more probing inquiry revealed the existence of practices obviously designed to circumvent desegregation, which were at the same time totally destructive of good education. These practices, summarized below, in subverting the letter and spirit of desegregation laws, subvert also the educational objectives of the public school institution.

1. Segregation of Classes: As noted earlier, the in-school segregation of students was not so obvious in September 1970 as it was in January and February, during the earlier Task Force surveys. With scattered exceptions, the segregation that now occurs is largely the result of student tracking or ability grouping, which has been widely instituted in both Louisiana and Mississippi. In some districts, it was reported that this practice was in effect before the advent of desegregation, but there can be little doubt that many more districts are using the tracking system as a device for student resegregation. Black teachers

are usually found teaching lower track classes, which are all or predominantly black; conversely, white teachers and white students comprise the upper track groups, with classes in the middle range approaching some degree of racial balance. In Rosedale, Mississippi, there is a two-track system, with blacks predominantly in the vocational group and whites in the academic. In numerous districts, tracking is more complicated, categorizing students into A, B, C, D, and E groups. In Okolona, Mississippi, this method of student grouping, reportedly based on California Achievement Test scores, has resulted in the following assignment at the sixth grade level of one school:

A - all white
B - 5 black of 22 in the class
C - approximately 50-50 black-white ratio
D - 7 white of 32 in the class
E - 29 black students, no whites

Testing and grouping of the students at this school, reportedly, are performed only by white teachers. It is also reported that no black teacher has an A or B class, while there is no white teaching a D or E. There is near unanimity among education authorities concerning the educationally harmful effects of such rigid compartmentalization of children.

Student selection of teachers is another device by which classes are segregated. In East Tallahatchie, Mississippi, for example, white students registered first and chose their white teachers. Some classes were later reshuffled, but all black classes remain.

2. Segregation of Schools: In addition to the de facto segregation of the larger urban centers, some predominantly or all-black and white

schools remain in the rural and small town areas of both Louisiana and Mississippi. In some cases, this is the result of gerrymandering; but in a number of instances, it is the product of "boundary-jumping," the ostensibly forbidden, but frequently winked-upon practice of student attendance at schools outside their assigned attendance area in order to avoid desegregation. In Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, a white parent told Task Force members that at the all-white elementary school in her area, a school "safely" surrounded by a white suburban housing development, it had been necessary to erect portable classrooms to house the 150 white students who had fled from their assigned predominantly black attendance center.

In predominantly black school districts of Mississippi, the "freedom-of-choice" plan has a 1970 court-approved counterpart called the "freedom-of-transfer" plan. The court order governing West Tallahatchie, for example, permits students of the racial minority group within a given school to transfer to another school where they will be members of a larger minority. The "freedom-of-transfer" policy in this district has resulted in three of the four elementary schools having an all-black enrollment.

3. Segregation on Buses: Segregated busing continues in many districts. Responding to Task Force inquiries, several school officials referred to this as de facto segregation, a consequence of neighborhood racial patterns. However, testimony from teachers and bus drivers indicated that in some districts, separate school buses carry black and white students over identical or closely similar routes. This was observed

by Task Force members in South Panola, Mississippi. In West Tallahatchee, Mississippi, busing is completely segregated.

Racial segregation within buses was also observed. In Lauderdale County, Mississippi, it was reported, the buses have assigned seating sections by race, with part of the buses reserved for white and the other for black students. A white mother has obtained seating reservations for her children. On three occasions, black children have sat in these reserved seats because the black section was full; and on each occasion, the blacks have been suspended for three days for thus violating the racial seating arrangement.

4. Segregation of Sexes: As schools have desegregated racially, the practice of segregation by sex has been revived and has spread to many districts in Mississippi and Louisiana. This form of segregation, introduced in Yalabusha County, Mississippi, at all grade levels prompted black student boycotts and protest marches at the beginning of the school year, resulting in the arrest of some students on the charge of "walking on the grass". The patterns of sexual segregation vary; in southern Louisiana, a number of districts have segregated all high schools and have instituted split shifts to permit a kind of sexual segregation within middle schools; in some northern Louisiana districts, the junior high and middle schools are segregated by sex. Reportedly, there is much dissatisfaction with this type of segregation on the part of both black and white students, particularly at the high school level where it could be described as having a chilling effect on extra-curricular activities.

5. School Organization and Use: Under the pressure of court orders, there is increasing use of formerly all-black schools by the desegregated

systems of Louisiana and Mississippi. A fortunate result, regarded by black students with some cynicism, has been the renovation and remodeling of the black schools to make them fit for white students. As noted by the earlier Task Forces, great emphasis is placed on repainting of restrooms and locker rooms, replacing commodes, and on obliterating all emblems of school and racial identity. There remains, however, a marked under-utilization of formerly black schools, and in many districts, a consequent overcrowding of the schools that were all white. Because so many black schools were built during the late fifties and early sixties in the hope of persuading black students and parents and the courts that separate really could be equal, many of these schools are newer and structurally superior to the white schools. But even some of the most modern and spacious black schools have been closed, reserved for remedial classes using only a small portion of the available space, converted into vocational schools, or phased down from high school to junior high and lower grades. The prevalence of this pattern is indicated by the report of the Louisiana Education Association that since 1968, a total of 108 previously all-black high schools have been closed, "phased down," or converted to some special use. For the black student, transfer to the formerly all-white high school means forfeiture of athletic trophies and symbols of black school achievement; in only one district, Jefferson Davis County, Mississippi, it was reported that school officials had promised the students that their athletic trophies would be transported to the newly desegregated high school. This had not been accomplished at the time of the Task Force visit.

The consequence of the under-utilization of former black schools was vividly illustrated to one Task Force team in Simpson County, Mississippi. New Hymn School, housing grades 1-12, new and in good condition, was converted into a desegregated elementary school for the current school year. The school now enrolls 229 students, compared to an enrollment of 350 last year. Pinola, the formerly white twelfth grade school, on the other hand, appears to be at least 40 years old and in notably poor repair. Pinola, despite its condition has been converted into the senior high school. Before going to Pinola High School, the Task Force team was informed by the New Hymn principal (black) that Pinola was extremely overcrowded, with a current enrollment of over 600 compared to 350 last year. It was reported by teachers at New Hymn School that Pinola had a 10th grade class with 85 students, and that the school auditorium was being used for a number of classes in simultaneous session. Just prior to their visit to the high school, a white teacher telephoned the school's principal (white) and told him to expect the Task Force members. Upon being escorted through Pinola High School by the assistant principal (white), the team was surprised to note no visible signs of extreme overcrowding. Over a period of about one hour, there was no classroom use of the auditorium; and no classes with as many as 85 students were observed. It was not until the conclusion of the field visitations that the team learned that immediately prior to their arrival at Pinola High, a large number of students were taken out of the school and seated in the bleachers of the school gymnasium, where they waited until the Task Force visit was over.

There are countless examples of the gross waste of school building space and facilities: In Raleigh, Mississippi, the school system has purchased 16 mobile units to house the students; the two black schools in this district, both in excellent condition are closed. In Columbus, Mississippi, the previously all-black high school (grades 8-12) has been converted to house only seventh grades; with a building capacity of 1,500, the school enrolls only about 800 students. In this same school, girls are not assigned physical education, although excellent facilities exist and are unused. Two previously white schools, on opposite sides of town, are housing the senior high school grades; the senior high building on the far side of town is in poor condition, overcrowded, and has had to erect portables to accommodate the enrollment. Only the formerly black high school (now seventh grade) has shop facilities. In Ascension Parish, Louisiana, the majority of black students have been moved into previously all-white schools, which are so overcrowded that rooms in these schools, have been divided by constructing a wall to make two rooms, half the size of normal classrooms. At the same time, several previously all-black schools are almost empty, with two or three kindergarten classes. Reports indicated that many whites are dissatisfied with the situation, but are afraid to articulate their feelings publicly. In at least one Louisiana parish (Claiborne), there is another type of under-utilization of schools; this system schedules a shortened school day, dismissing at 1:00 P.M. Team members reporting from several other school districts stated that they had observed little or no after-school activities on the school

grounds, suggesting that the prevailing white attitude toward desegregation may have curtailed the accessibility of the public schools both to the students and the community.

The above summary merely exemplifies instances of school nonuse, misuse, and under-use observed by Task Force members in most districts visited; it does not begin to measure the tremendous cost to the taxpayer in terms of wasted school buildings and facilities, nor the immeasurable educational losses incurred through overcrowding and inefficient use of schools.

6. Departmentalization: Similar in educational unsoundness to the patchwork of grade levels assigned to schools is the excessive departmentalization of elementary grade levels and the irrational scheduling of classes in the desegregated schools. One Task Force team commented, "Departmentalization is another tool to appease white parents, who are thus guaranteed that their children will not be with a black teacher all day. Some children have four to six teachers in a single day. White teachers, as well as black, are disturbed about this. Some of them have approached the black teachers, suggesting that they bypass the superintendent's directives by remaining with their children two to three periods at a time."

In one middle school in Richland Parish, Louisiana, all classes, except Language Arts, are 40 minutes in length. The Language Arts classes, taught only by white teachers, are two hours in length. One black teacher in this parish has an assignment of eight periods per day; another has four periods of sixth grade Physical Education (class size 48, 38, 38, and 36), plus two periods of Social Studies, and a long lunch room monitor's duty. Elementary students in East

Tallahatchie Parish are bused to different schools for their classes at two-hour periods throughout each school day; secondary students are bused between two schools for different subjects. This busing plan was devised by the board of education and approved by the court--an altogether strange phenomenon in a region so anti-pathetic to busing.

7. Curtailment of Extracurricular Activities: The curtailment and, in some instances, virtual elimination of extracurricular activities has not changed since the date of the initial Task Force reports. Social events, such as school proms, are no longer held in high schools; such festivities take place now in white students' homes or in other places where blacks are excluded. In some districts, it was reported, black girls have been elected cheerleaders, but more often, cheerleading teams and all school clubs, including the student government (where it is still maintained) are all white. Reports from several districts in both states indicated that new qualifications have been established for participation in various groups. In Tupelo, Mississippi, for example, there is a recently formulated requirement that to be a majorette a girl must have played an instrument in the band for the last two years and must be selected by the bandmaster. In Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, to become a member of the dance team, there is a requirement that students must be attending dancing school. In order to become majorettes in the Okolona (Mississippi) High School band, students were told that they would be required to attend summer music school at a cost of $65, prohibitive for most black students in that poor area.

Generally, in both curricular and extracurricular activities, the desegregated schools of Mississippi and Louisiana are operated on the terms and conditions set by whites, governed by white rules, and committed to the transmittal and perpetuation of white values, attitudes, and traditions. It is not surprising, since so many of those values, attitudes, and traditions are preoccupied with the myth of white supremacy, that the black students feel that they, like their black teachers, have experienced displacement, rather than desegregation.

IV. Continuing Growth of Private School Movement

> "The President's chief spokesman on integration says it will be up to the Southern(er)s to prove that tax-exempt private academies are discriminating against Negroes.
>
> "Elliot L. Richardson, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, disavowed responsibility for monitoring the academies which have been springing up in the South as public schools moved toward desegregation.
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> * * *
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> "'I don't think we want to ask for or employ a large force of investigators to send to the South for this,' Richardson said. 'I think we have to rely on the people of the South.'"[1]

And the white people of the South, in increasing numbers, are relying on a spreading network of private academies as a means of maintaining for their children a racially segregated system of education. The Southern Regional Council of Atlanta, Georgia, has estimated a fall 1970 private school enrollment of 400,000 students in the eleven Southern states. In Mississippi alone, the Council has reported, there were 209 private schools of all types as of the 1969-70 school year; nine more were scheduled to open for the 1970-71 school year. Of the 421 private schools in Louisiana, 32 have been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; 106 have been approved by the state; and 222 are operating without any form of accreditation. The

[1]"Won't Monitor Academies, HEW Says," The Atlanta Journal, Friday, August 7, 1970.

effect of desegregation on the private school movement is reflected in the fact that during 1968-69, three new private schools were reported as being established in Louisiana, whereas, during the 1969-70 session, 38 such schools were officially established.

In most of the Louisiana and Mississippi districts visited by the NEA Task Force, one or more private segregation academies have been established since the start of the 1969-70 school year. The greatest exodus of white students and teachers, predictably, has occurred in those districts with majority or near majority black populations. One of the most serious threats to public education, Task Force members reported, is the lowering of school tax rates that has accompanied school desegregation and the establishment of private academies in some districts. This was not a major area of investigation; however, reports were received of several Mississippi districts where millages have been lowered within the past year. In Hollandale, Mississippi, for example, where the school system has become all black since desegregation, school taxes have been lowered by 1.5 mills this year; and in Greenwood, Mississippi the City Council has reduced the annual school tax by one-half mill, claiming loss of teacher units funded by the state.

In many of the districts visited, there was evidence that private school students are being transported in public school buses, are using instructional materials and facilities loaned or donated from the public school, and are being housed in buildings that were formerly public schools, leased or sold to private individuals and ultimately conveyed to private school groups. In South Panola, Mississippi, a public school, reported as having been sold for $100, is allegedly now being used for a private segregated academy. Although the

building is dilapidated, the property includes 5.2 acres, making the sale price far below market value. In North Panola, an elementary school, sold for $5,001.00 is now an all-white private high school. In Claiborne Parish, Louisiana, it was reported that the public school stadium has been leased to a private academy, which also receives not only textbooks (allowed by state law), but desks and other school equipment funded by public money.

The siphoning off of public moneys to segregated private school education is not only a local matter; the states of Mississippi and Louisiana are in the private school business too. At its 1970 session, the Louisiana State Legislature appropriated $10 million for paying private and parochial school teachers' salaries. An estimated 4,000 private and parochial school teachers are said to be eligible for the payments. As this report is being written, litigation challenging the 1970 law is in progress.

According to a May 1970 report in South Today, published by the Southern Regional Council, the State of Louisiana, under a 1938 State Supreme Court ruling, has been providing money to bus all students, public and private alike. The Mississippi legislature has passed a bill which puts private schools on the same footing as public schools in the purchase of bus tags, the report states. Thus, private schools in Mississippi are no longer required to purchase expensive comm .l licenses in order to operate buses.[1]

There was, however, one note of encouragement in Task Force reports concerning private segregation academies: Some of them at least have a low student retention rate. In several districts now entering their second year of desegregation, school officials reported a return of white students who had originally fled to the private academies to avoid desegregation.

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[1]"The Busing Myth: Seg. Academies Bus More Children, and Further," Levine, Leonard and Griffith, Kitty, South Today, Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Georgia, May 1970, p. 7.

V. Misuse of Federal Funds

The misuse of federal funds for education, although not the subject of intensive Task Force study, was revealed as a serious problem in a number of the school districts visited. NEA Task Force members found evidence strongly supporting earlier reports by other organizations that Title I funds are being widely misused, to supplant rather than supplement district and state funds. For example, in Amory City, Mississippi, eight teachers paid with Title I funds are assigned to regular classes, through the device of assigning them to teach the lowest levels in the A-B-C-D-E ability grouping program, thereby filling what would otherwise be regular assignments. Similar reports were received from Louisiana parishes. According to information reported by the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee, New Orleans, Louisiana, to the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and made available to Task Force members, Title I moneys are being used to pay the salaries of regular classroom teachers, who perform only regular classroom duties and who offer nothing compensatory or unique; they are being used for construction of portable classrooms housing all black students in "desegregated" schools; they are being used for driver's education and business education programs, for physical education and recreation programs that are not compensatory in nature; and, overwhelmingly, they are being used to enforce racial isolation in the schools. Districts mentioned in the report included Claiborne, Madison, Washington, East Feliciano, Concordia, Caddo, and Orleans Parishes.

In Okolona, Mississippi, it was reported, portable units purchased with Title I funds in 1966 are used for classes in home economics, math, band and physical education. Also, in Okolona, four of fourteen black teachers who were fired this year (because of failure to make the required minimum NTE score, set at 800, after the tests were taken) were offered reemployment under Title

I. The Task Force team that visited this district stated, "This suggests the the possibility that Title I offers a unique opportunity for districts to get teachers off the regular payroll and back into the system under a federal subsidy and without normal continuing employment rights."

In at least two Louisiana parishes--Evangeline and Richland--the media centers, where the school administrative offices are located, were constructed with Title I funds. A number of Task Force reports indicated that federally funded Title I programs are operating with all-white staffs and without the involvement of black teachers or citizens, even on a consultative basis.

Discriminatory activity in other federally funded areas was also reported by Task Force members. According to information made available to the Task Force, vocational education centers and programs in Mississippi are in many ways continuing the familiar patterns of segregation and discrimination of the regular public schools across the state.

--Of 26 regular secondary vocational complexes and two in correctional institutions, not one is headed or directed by a black man.

--Of 22 post-secondary regular and one correctional vocational complex, the only ones headed by blacks (reportedly not more than four or five) are those in which the student body is black.

--A total of $50,000,000 in state and federal moneys is reportedly being spent on these 51 vocational complexes.

--It is alleged that of 1,860 full-time teachers in 457 vocational centers, only a small percent are black, and this number is being reduced.

--No black on the staff of the Division of Vocational Education in the State Department of Education has been involved in the planning and development of new vocational complexes, for which $20,500,000 has been budgeted.

Information in this area was not obtained with respect to Louisiana vocational programs. Task Force members felt, however, that the information outlined above, although incomplete, was of such significance that it should be included in this report.

VI. Lack of Black Representation on Boards of Education

Basic to the major problem of school desegregation in Mississippi and Louisiana (and in other states as well) is the fact mentioned earlier in this report--that control of the desegregation process is vested in the same individuals and groups who controlled, and struggled to retain the segregated system of public education. Black representation on boards of education is as scarce as it is in the administrative offices of Mississippi and Louisiana school districts. In the districts visited, where blacks are on local school boards, they do not have a majority voice, even when blacks comprise a majority of the population.

As emphasized in earlier reports of the National Education Association, political organization of black communities--and of teachers as active, politically aware members of these communities--is of vital importance if meaningful school integration, or quality education for black students and equitable treatment for black educators, are ever to be achieved.

> "The blight of racial discrimination has infected this nation from its beginning; there are no quick and easy methods of cure. And the short history of school desegregation in the South has made it plainly evident that externally applied pressures--whether from the federal Executive or Judicial branch or from national organizations--will not alone alter the patterns of white resistance to social change. The pressures must

> come from the black community--from the parents, from the students, from the educators, and from existing black community institutions organized into a strong collective of aggrieved individuals exercising the initiative to influence the public school system to serve them properly."[1]

It is clear to this Task Force that the National Education Association, through its recognized state affiliates in Louisiana and Mississippi and through their local affiliates, is in a position to aid in the effective organization of black teachers, in alliance with their communities into a cohesive educational and political force through which legitimate representation of their mutual interests can be achieved. The Task Force urges that the Association continue and strengthen the efforts that it has already undertaken in this direction.

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[1]National Education Association Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Beyond Desegregation: The Problem of Power. The Association: Washington, D.C., February 1970, p. 57.